

# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

## THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PRIVATE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU MAY ACCESS THIS INFORMATION

Our Healthcare Practice takes patient privacy matters seriously. We work hard to meet and exceed all existing rules and regulations and will work to keep you informed regarding our office policies and your personal rights regarding privacy.

We are required by federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required to give you this NOTICE about our privacy practices, our duties, and your rights concerning your personal health information. We must follow the privacy practices described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect on April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it, at which time we will issue a new Notice to Patients indicating a new activation date. You may request a copy of our Notice at any time, and may request additional copies, as needed by contacting our office.

### How We Disclose Health Information:

#### Specialist Referrals:

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment within our practice, for general healthcare operations, and payment collection. That means your information is available to our immediate staff, and to other practitioners who we may refer you to for additional treatment. This includes, but is not limited to, other healthcare specialists such as surgeons, laboratories and the like. We will exercise our judgment in only distributing the minimum necessary information needed when sending health information to any outside Associates.

#### General Business Operations:

Your information may be reviewed in the course of general healthcare operations for activities such as conducting quality reviews, assessing practitioner performance, evaluation of business costs, conducting training programs, licensing, accreditation, and certain certification activities, and other business related evaluations to help us in improving our delivery of healthcare to our patients.

#### Payment and Collection:

Your health information will be sent to third party payers for insurance collection and, when applicable, to collection agencies for assistance to us receiving payment for services rendered. Additionally information may be used from time to time as necessary to secure payment for services. We will use our professional judgment and experience with common practice to make decisions on what information to disclose to secure payment.

#### Family, Friends, Personal Representatives and Others:

We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend, or other persons to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare. You may however request that we not disclose to anyone other than yourself, of which we will abide. An example where we might disclose to a family member or friend might be when someone drives you to the practice and we are reporting on progress and time remaining before completion, or where a family member desires to pick up a prescription or x-rays on your behalf. We will use our professional judgment and experience with common practice when disclosing your health information that it is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We may disclose health information to others who may be involved in your health care and are trying to ascertain your general condition, your current location, or learn of your death.

#### Marketing Health-Related Services:

We will not use your health information for marketing communications without your written authorization. Under federal privacy rules we may send you update information about our practice or healthcare system, send you information regarding programs and products we offer to further enhance your care and treatment, send reminder notices for appointments, and offer small nominal gifts from time to time, such as tooth brushes, which is not considered marketing. We will never provide your name to an outside organization for marketing.